United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

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DH/1159
10 June 1992

WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Advance group of 60 military observers from United Nations Protection Force in Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR) are en route to Sarajevo to assess security situation at airport; will report to Secretary-General.

+ Secretary-General's Special Representative for Cambodia, Yasushi Akashi, announces that UNTAC will go ahead with second phase of cease-fire as planned on 13 June, despite unwillingness of Democratic Kampuchea to comply with Paris Accords of last October.

+ Secretary-General and President of Brazil inaugurate project to improve condition of children in Brazil.

+ Speakers in the continuing general debate at Rio Earth Summit state their concerns about the degradation of the environment.

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An advance group of 60 military observers of the United Nations Protection Force in Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR), headed by the Chief of Staff of the United Nations Force, Brigadier General Louis McKenzie, left Belgrade this morning en route for Sarajevo, to assess the situation at the local airport, according to a United Nations spokesman today.

The advance group will be joined by another 60 observers borrowed from the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) and the United Nations Iraq Kuwait Observer Mission (UNIKOM), who will arrive in Sarajevo in the next few days. The Group will report to the Secretary-General on the security situation at the airport. In addition, 50 French experts in airport security were due to arrive in Belgrade today. The whole team was expected to be in place by the weekend, the spokesman said.

On Monday, 8 June, the Security Council authorized the Secretary-General to deploy military observers to Sarajevo "when he finds it appropriate", as a first step to ensure unimpeded delivery of humanitarian supplies to Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a second step, a 1,000-member infantry battalion would be deployed to ensure the immediate security of the airport, allowing civilian

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personnel to be sent in and the airport to open for humanitarian and official flights. The Security Council resolution stipulates however that the deployment of the troops is contingent upon "an effective and durable cease-fire" in Sarajevo.

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Yasushi Akashi, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Cambodia, announced today that despite Democratic Kampuchea's unwillingness to comply with the Paris Peace Accords signed last October, the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) would go ahead with the second phase of the peace plan as intended, on June 13. He made the announcement at a meeting of Cambodia's Supreme National Council.

According to phase two of the plan, UNTAC will begin to regroup and canton selected forces of the three other parties who, with Democratic Kampuchea, were signatories to the Paris Agreement. The troops are to put themselves under the control of the United Nations peacekeeping forces, surrender their arms and wait to be demobilized.

Mr. Akashi stressed that free movement of United Nations troops throughout Cambodia was essential if UNTAC was to operate effectively and fulfil its mandate. Should Democratic Kampuchea decide to rejoin the peace process, he said, UNTAC stood ready to accommodate them. While urging maximum self-restraint, he said that if they decided to step up their military activities, UNTAC "will have to bear in mind the right to self-defense of the other Cambodian parties".

Mr. Akashi has sent a report to the Secretary-General, who is currently in Rio de Janeiro, and will keep the Security Council informed of further developments through the Secretary-General.

The Special Representative reported earlier this week that while the overall situation was improving, cease-fire violations were still occurring in the Kompong Thom province where the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea had recently laid new mines.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and President Fernando Collor this morning inaugurated a Presidential project consisting of 5,000 centres throughout the State of Rio de Janeiro, providing food, education and social services to an estimated seven million children.

The Secretary-General was scheduled to depart this afternoon for a tour of the Rio Itaipu dam, the largest in the world, located between the States of Parana and Santa Catarina. Mr. Boutros-Ghali would then hold a number of internal meetings with senior officials of the United Nation system, including the Executive Secretary of Economic Commission for Latin America and the

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Caribbean (ECLAC), Gert Rosenthal.

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Attempts to dilute or avoid commitments to additional concessional finance for environmental programmes amounted to self-deception, Y. Seyyid Abdulai, Director-General of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Fund for International Development, told the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, yesterday.

He said the South was not now the major offender in environmental pollution, but it was bound to become the greater polluter eventually. "Either the people of the earth prosper together", he said, "or we will eventually choke to death together".

The Russian Federation's Minister for Ecology and Natural Resources told the Summit that the unreliability of Russia's nuclear energy facilities and the improper storage of its nuclear waste posed a major danger to the world's environmental well-being.

With one-sixth of the earth's total land mass, Russia's environmental situation was critical to the world as a whole, he said. Unfortunately, now that it was attempting to correct the environmental oversights of the past, it lacked the necessary financial investment. It would have to develop its own resources, one of which was timber. But, aside from their economic value, Russia's forests played an important part in slowing global warming and partial deforestation could have a drastic impact on the climate.

Albert Gore, a United States Senator, speaking on behalf of the Global Legislators' Organization for a Balanced Environment, underlined that Governments could only do a certain amount; beyond that it was up to the people of every country to recognize their own connection to the Earth and the responsibility that comes with it. The Summit, he stated, was already a success because every nation in the world was thinking about the same challenge at the same time, in a new way.

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United Nations

Daily Highlights

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11 June 1992

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General "deeply dismayed" over attack on United Nations convoy yesterday in Sarajevo; calls humanitarian situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina "desperate" and appeals for the urgent implementation of agreement to reopen airport.

+ Secretary-General's Special Representative for Western Sahara, S. Yaqub-Khan, meets in Geneva with delegation of POLISARIO for talks on reactivating peace plan for that Territory.

+ At the Earth Summit in Rio, last minute negotiations continue to resolve remaining issues, before the beginning tomorrow of the largest ever gathering of world leaders; Convention on Biological Diversity enters into force.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in a statement issued today in Rio de Janeiro, expressed his concern that the accord on the opening of Sarajevo airport had not yet been implemented. "The humanitarian situation is reaching a stage which can only be characterized as desperate", he warned. He said he was "deeply dismayed" that the United Nations vehicles had been fired on last night and that their mobility had been impeded by mines and other barriers, "despite explicit guarantees of safe passage by all sides".

"A heavy responsibility weighs on the leaders of all parties involved in this conflict, and especially upon those who disregard humanitarian considerations or deliberately stand in the way of a political settlement", he said. He called on all the parties involved to implement the airport accord, saying it would facilitate the resumption of efforts towards a political settlement in Bosnia and Herzegovina within the Conference on Yugoslavia. The reactivation of the political process on a continued basis was the only way out of the present "senseless bloodshed and destruction".

He reminded the parties concerned that "membership in the United Nations requires adherence to the Principles of the Charter and the most fundamental humanitarian laws that the international community expects nations to respect".

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For information media—not an official record

The United Nations convoy from Belgrade carrying a group of military observers, which was fired upon last night as it approached Sarajevo and forced to turn back, today entered the city and reached the headquarters of the United Nations Protection Force in Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR). The group includes 66 members of the advance team that is to assess the possibility of securing Sarajevo airport, so that it can open to flights of humanitarian nature for the city and other areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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The Secretary-General's Special Representative for Western Sahara, S. Yaqub-Khan, met this morning in Geneva at the Palais des Nations with a delegation from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro (POLISARIO).

According to a press communiqué issued in Geneva today, Mr. Yaqub-Khan described the discussions as "friendly and constructive" and said that he would be meeting with the delegation again tomorrow morning.

The meeting was in the context of current efforts to reactivate the settlement plan for self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. Mr. Khan is scheduled to travel to Morocco on Sunday for talks with the Moroccan side, and will then go to Tindouf, in Algeria, where he will meet again with POLISARIO representatives. He intends to return to New York on 21 June, where he will hold further talks with both sides.

The Security Council last week endorsed a recommendation by the Secretary-General that the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) be extended until the end of August. By then, he said, if the peace process remained deadlocked, in spite of the ongoing talks with the parties involved, the Council might consider taking a different approach to resolving the conflict.

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Last minute negotiations continued today to resolve some delicate issues before the beginning of the largest ever gathering of world leaders to be held tomorrow, 12 June, at the United Nations Environment and Development Conference in Rio. One hundred and eighteen Heads of State and Government are expected to attend the two-day summit.

According to reports from Rio, the Main Committee met from Wednesday until dawn today to finalize agreement. The remaining issues will be taken up at the Ministerial level. One of the major areas of controversy is official development assistance (ODA). The problem is for developed countries to meet the United Nation target of 0.7 per cent of the gross national product for official development assistance.

Among other issues to be resolved were the global environment facility, one of the mechanisms for funding Agenda 21 -- a blueprint for action for the sustainable development of planet Earth into the twenty-first century. There

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was also disagreement over the possible negotiation of a future legal instrument on forests, as well as on a paragraph referring to national trade in foreign forests from sustainably managed forest resources, which is opposed by Asian and African countries.

Agreements reached so far concern freshwater resources, biological diversity, biotechnology and transfer of enviromentally safe and sound technology, although all references to "safe" remain unresolved.

In a separate development, 31 countries had signed by Tuesday the Convention on Biological Diversity. The document has thus entered into force despite the controversy that has surrounded it. It had required just 30 nations to ratify, accept, approve or acceed to it.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change requires at least 50 signatories. It had also been signed by 31 countries. Both instruments were opened for signature last week.

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12 June 1992

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council expresses concern over "difficulties" encountered by the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia, on the eve of the implementation of second phase of cease-fire agreement; urges Secretary-General to accelerate full deployment of peace-keeping force; Special Representative Yasushi Akashi recommends three amendments to electoral law.

+ In Rio de Janeiro this morning, Secretary-General and President of Brazil welcome Heads of State and Government to two-day summit meeting of United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

+ Security Council renews mandate of United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus for another six months, until 15 December; asks Secretary-General to submit proposal on restructuring of Force.

+ Secretary-General's Special Representative for Western Sahara, Sahabzada Yaqub-Khan, meets for second day with POLISARIO representatives in Geneva; to go to Morocco over the weekend before traveling to Algeria for new round of talks.

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The President of the Security Council expressed "deep concern" today, on behalf of Council members, over "difficulties" encountered by the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), on the eve of implementing the second phase of the cease-fire, in compliance with the Paris Accords of last October.

In a Presidential statement, read out by Council President Peter Noterdaeme (Belgium), the Council stressed the need for the second phase of the military arrangements to begin on 13 June, as planned, and urged the Secretary-General to accelerate the deployment of the full UNTAC peace-keeping force to Cambodia, and within the country.

It noted that during the meeting of the Supreme National Council of 10 June, one party was not able to allow the necessary deployment of UNTAC in

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For information media—not an official record

areas under its control. The Council said that "any delay could jeopardize the whole peace process to which all Cambodian parties have agreed under the auspices of the United Nations and the Paris Conference".

Reaffirming the importance of the "full and timely" implementation of the Paris Accords, the Council commended the efforts of the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Yasushi Akashi, and UNTAC in that regard. It reaffirmed that the Supreme National Council under the chairmanship of Prince Norodom Sihanouk was the "unique legitimate body and source of authority in which, throughout the transitional period, the sovereignty, independence, and unity of Cambodia are enshrined".

By the statement, the Council finally called on all the parties to comply strictly with the commitments they have accepted, and to respond affirmatively to the latest demands by UNTAC for co-operation in implementing the Accords.

On Wednesday, 10 June, Mr. Akashi said UNTAC would go ahead with the second phase of the peace plan despite Democratic Kampuchea's unwillingness to comply with the Paris Accords. He warned that if that party decided to step up their military activities, UNTAC would "have to bear in mind the right to self-defense of the other Cambodian parties".

In a related development, the Special Representative has recommended that the Security Council make three amendments to UNTAC's plan concerning the electoral law, according to a press communiqué issued today in Phnom Penh.

Regarding the criteria for voter registration, Mr. Akashi proposed that only people over 18 years of age and born in Cambodia be allowed to participate in the elections, with no exceptions. In addition, he suggested, three polling stations should be established outside of Cambodia, in a United Nations agency: in Paris or Geneva, in New York and in Australia. Finally, the portrait of Prince Sihanouk should not be used as an insignia of any party during the electoral process.

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In Rio de Janeiro this morning, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, together with President Fernando Collor de Mello of Brazil, welcomed Heads of State and Government to the opening session of the plenary of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

Twenty-eight speakers were scheduled to address the plenary this morning, the first of them being the Prime Minister of India, P.V. Narasimha. This afternoon 29 were to speak, starting with President George Bush of the United States.

This afternoon, the Secretary-General was scheduled to meet with the President of Argentina, Carlos Saúl Menem.

Yesterday, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali met with Sadako Ogata, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to discuss humanitarian assistance to

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Yugoslavia. According to his spokesman, he and Mrs. Ogata also discussed the return of refugees from Bangladesh and the situation in Haiti.

The Secretary-General also received the Foreign Minister of Italy, Gianni de Michelis, and the United Kingdom's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Sir David Hannay. He met later with the Foreign Minister of Algeria, Lakhdar Brahimi, the Foreign Minister of Morocco, Abdellatif Filali, the Prime Minister of China, Li Peng, and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Abdel Meguid.

Addressing the Rio Summit yesterday, Sadako Ogata, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), told delegates that environmental degradation was increasingly a cause of population movements. The relationship between refugees and the environment had long been overlooked.

There were currently about 17 million refugees and displaced persons in the world, she said. More and more refugees had been forced to flee for a complex combination of reasons which were linked as much to population growth, poverty, famine and environmental degradation, as to mass violations of human rights, ethnic tensions and armed conflict. Mrs. Ogata said refugee movements themselves could lead to environmental destruction when large numbers of people were seaking sanctuary in ecologically fragile areas.

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The Security Council this morning extended the mandate of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) for a further six months period, until 15 December, and asked the Secretary-General to submit specific proposals on the restructuring of the Force.

The Council took that action by unanimously adopting resolution 759 (1992), which asked the Secretary-General to submit his proposals no later than 1 September, after consulting with the troop-contributing Governments. The Council also asked the Secretary-General to continue his mission of good offices and keep the Council informed of progress made. It asked that he submit a report on the implementation of the present resolution by 30 November, and called upon the parties concerned to continue cooperating with the Force.

The Secretary-General, in his report recommending the renewal of UNFICYP's mandate, had stressed that "the functions of UNFICYP remain valid and necessary". However, he said, as a result of its "uniquely unsatisfactory system of financing", the Council might soon have to decide how to respond to the withdrawal or reduction of one or more of the Force's main contingents.

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Mr. Yaqub-Khan, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, held today a second meeting with a delegation from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro (POLISARIO) in Geneva, according to a press communiqué issued in Geneva. Characterized as

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helpful and constructive by the Special Representative, the meeting served to review and discuss the various points put forward by the head of the POLISARIO delegation, Mr. Mustapha Bashir.

After a visit to Morocco over the coming weekend for discussions with the authorities there, the Special Representative is due to travel to Tindouf in Algeria for a further round of talks with senior POLISARIO officials.

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United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

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15 June 1992

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General, at close of Rio meeting, welcomes new action plan for environmental protection and sustainable development; holds talks with world leaders before returning to New York.

+ "New approaches to international cooperation in space in a changing world" is theme of meeting at Headquarters to mark International Space Year 1992; Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space begins thirty-fifth session.

+ World Food Programme launches emergency airlift to provide wheat to nearly 100,000 people in two districts of Kenya; announces arrival of more food aid to Somalia.

+ Executive Board of United Nations Children's Fund begins 1992 session at Headquarters; to discuss action in Africa, children's needs in Central and Eastern Europe, and Commonwealth of Independent States.

+ The number of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase more than 2.5 times by 2025, according to report by Population Division of the Department for Economic and Social Development (DESD).

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At the end of the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro on Sunday, 14 June, delegates representing more than 170 countries adopted three nonbinding documents calling for environmentally sound sustainable development.

Delegates approved by consensus a Declaration on Environment and Development -- containing principles of policies; Agenda 21 -- a plan for environmental action through the 21st century; and a statement to guide forestry practices. A negotiating process has also been mandated for a Convention on Desertification.

Also, more than 150 countries have now signed both the Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

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In a statement delivered at the closing ceremony, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali welcomed the adoption of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, which, he said, "marks a significant advance. It places people at the centre of our concerns. It deals with both environmental and development issues. It reflects a commitment to certain basic principles. It represents a delicate compromise of various perceptions and priorities. The strength of this compromise is precisely that it is accepted by every nation in the world and not just one or another group of nations", he observed.

The Secretary-General further indicated that he was "deeply gratified that as of today 153 countries have signed the Framework Convention on Climate Change and 153 countries have signed the Convention on Biodiversity.

Regarding the Agenda 21, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali stated that he sees that document as "the centre-piece of international cooperation and of coordination of activities within the United Nations system for many years to come". "We now have an action programme that takes the first steps towards spelling out the concept of sustainable development and planetary development in terms of specific actions", he said.

Before leaving Rio, the Secretary-General met with Edward Perkins, United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations; with President Ion Iliescu of Romania; with President Levon Ter Petrossian of Armenia, with whom he reviewed the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh; and with the Foreign Minister of Tunisia, Habib Ben Yahia.

The Secretary-General also held a meeting with the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States (OAS), Joao Baena Soares, with whom he exchanged views on cooperation matters between the two organizations.

On Saturday, 13 June, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali met with President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos of Angola, with whom he discussed the current situation in that country, as well as the activities of the United Nations Mission in Angola (UNAVEM II). Later, the Secretary-General received the Prime Minister of Austria, Franz Vranitsky, for an exchange of views on the situation in Yugoslavia.

Saturday afternoon, the Secretary-General met with President Aylwin of Chile, with whom he discussed the Chilean initiative on the forthcoming Summit for Social Development and the possibility of an official visit to Chile in the near future in view of the recent suspension of his trip to Santiago due to reasons beyond his control.

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"New approaches to international cooperation in space in a changing world" was the theme for a commemorative meeting held today in New York to mark the 1992 International Space Year. The meeting was in the context of the thirty-fifth session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space which began today at Headquarters.

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During its session, which is to continue through 26 June, the Committee will review work aimed at reaching agreement on a set of draft principles on the safe use of nuclear power sources in outer space. It will also consider ways and means of using outer space for peaceful purposes and will review spin-off benefits of space technology.

At a press conference at Headquarters this morning, the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations, Peter Hohenfellner, linked the 1992 International Space Year with the just concluded Earth Summit in Rio saying space technology was an important tool in the monitoring of the global environment. He said the "incredible technology" developed to advance all nations' space programmes should "in these troubling times" be applied to benefit planet Earth.

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The World Food Programme (WFP) has launched an emergency airlift to deliver desperately needed wheat to nearly 100,000 people in two districts of Kenya that have been the hardest hit by the drought affecting the country. The Programme has urged international donors to provide additional donations of food.

The airlift, comprising 180 metric tonnes of wheat donated by the European Community, began on 11 June to Mandera and Wajir. It is needed to act as a bridge until food arrives from Mombassa in a truck convoy.

The beginning of the air operation marks the first phase of WFP's relief effort for victims of Kenya's worst drought in years. The WFP estimates that the resulting acute food shortages in 20 districts of Central, Northern and Eastern Kenya are affecting a combined population of nearly 1 million people.

Until now, Kenya has largely been spared food-shortage problems: it has been a net exporter for years, assisting other countries of the Horn of Africa. Beginning in 1991, however, unrest in Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan sent refugees streaming across the border into Kenya to seek safety and food. Faced with the interlocking problems of refugees and a second consecutive year of drought, the President of Kenya this week declared a state of emergency in the country.

In a separate development, the World Food Programme (WFP) has announced that a further 4,000 metric tonnes of emergency food aid has arrived off Mogadishu. The food is a gift from Saudi Arabia.

All the food, enough to feed about 1 million people for one month, will be immediately unloaded and distributed to people most at risk -- mothers, children and displaced people. Following intense factional fighting, the number of displaced people in Mogadishu has continued to rise. Known camps for displaced persons have already reached 186, with more than 300,000 people. Of these, approximately one fifth are children under age of five. The total number of Somalis in need of assistance is estimated at 4.2 million, of which 1 million are in Mogadishu.

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Programmes in Africa are given priority amongst the recommendations to be considered by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Executive Board, which began its 1992 session at Headquarters today. Also under consideration are proposals to deal with the growing number of emergencies, the special needs of children in Central and Eastern Europe and the Republics of the former Soviet Union, and in several developing and least developed countries.

Africa has been given priority because it is the only continent where the number of malnourished and dying children is rising, as a result of causes such as underdevelopment, natural disasters, economic mismanagement, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), war and inadequate international support.

The Board has before it for approval programme recommendations for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Middle east, as well as interregional programmes and projects in several developing countries and regions. The total amount of proposed spending from general resources is $451 million, and the total amount of proposed supplementary funding is $616 million.

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The number of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase more than 2.5 times by 2025 -- from 328 million in 1990 to 828 million -- according to estimates cited in a report issued by the Population Division of the Department for Economic and Social Development (DESD).

The report, entitled World Population Monitoring, 1991, reviews past trends and future prospects of the age structure and considers age distribution in a broad framework of global and historic age structures changes. Central to the current report is a decline in fertility rates, which leads to an "ageing" of the population, and an increase in life expectancy, which further tilts population numbers towards older groups.

Countries are grouped into three categories according to the timing of the onset of sustained fertility decline. Those where declines started before 1950, mainly more developed countries, show an almost constant rate - of about 1.9 children per woman - for the next 35 years, with the percentage of older people increasing sharply.

In the less developed regions fertility rates are expected to start declining. The number of children under 15 will still increase, but at a far slower rate than the size of the elderly population. In the least developed countries, the number of children under 15 is expected to have increased by 74 percent between 1950 and 2025, with the global total reaching 2.7 billion. However, worldwide the number of those under 15 is expected to decline to 25 per cent of the whole population by 2025, compared with 35 per cent in 1950.

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